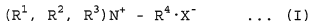


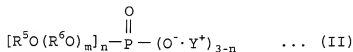
AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A water-permeable agent for fiber comprising a quaternary ammonium salt (A) represented by the following formula (I):



wherein each of R^1 and R^2 is independently a C_8 to C_{18} aliphatic hydrocarbon group; each of R^3 and R^4 is, independently, a hydrogen atom, C_1 to C_3 aliphatic hydrocarbon group, or C_1 to C_3 hydroxyalkyl group; and X is an ionic residue selected from the group consisting of halogen ions, nitrate ion, acetate ion, methyl sulfate ion, ethyl sulfate ion and dimethyl phosphate ion; and

a phosphate salt (B) represented by the following formula (II):

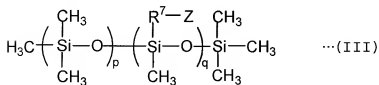


wherein R^5 is a C_6 - C_{20} aliphatic C_{12} aliphatic hydrocarbon group; R^6 is an ethylene and/or propylene group; m is an integer from 2 to 15; Y is an ionic residue selected from the group consisting of hydrogen ion, sodium ion, potassium ion, ammonium ion, diethanol ammonium ion, and triethanol ammonium ion; and n is an integer from 1 to 2; one of which wherein one of the quaternary ammonium salt (A) and the phosphate salt (B) constitutes 20 to 80 weight percent and the other of the quaternary ammonium salt (A) and the phosphate salt (B) constitutes 80 to 20 weight percent of the total of said quaternary ammonium salt (A) and said phosphate salt (B).

2. (Currently Amended) The water-permeable agent for fiber according to Claim 1, wherein said phosphate salt (B) is contained in an amount of 30 to 60 weight % based on the water-permeable agent and wherein said quaternary ammonium salt (A) is contained in an amount of 40 to 80 weight % and said phosphate salt (B) is contained in an amount of 60 to 20 weight % of the total of said quaternary ammonium salt (A) and said phosphate salt (B).

3. (Currently Amended) The water-permeable agent for fiber according to Claim 1, wherein R⁵ of the formula (II) is a C₈ to C₁₈ aliphatic-C₁₂ aliphatic hydrocarbon group and R⁶ of the formula (II) is an ethylene group.

4. (Previously Presented) The water-permeable agent for fiber according to Claim 1, further comprising 5 to 20 weight percent of polyoxyalkylene-modified silicone represented by the formula (III):



wherein R⁷ is a methylene group, ethylene group, propylene group, N-(aminoethyl) methylimino group, or N-(aminopropyl) propylimino group; Z is a polyoxyalkylene group containing at least 20 weight percent of polyoxyethylene moieties; and p and q are integers which attain a molecular weight of 1,000 to 100,000 and silicon content of 20 to 70 weight percent.

5. (Previously Presented) The water-permeable agent for fiber according to Claim 1 to be applied to nonwoven fabric.

6. (Previously Presented) The water-permeable agent for fiber according to Claim 1 to be applied to hydrophobic synthetic fiber or composite fiber thereof.

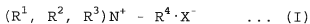
7. (Previously Presented) The water-permeable agent for fiber according to Claim 6, wherein the hydrophobic synthetic fiber is polyolefin fiber.

8. (Original) Water-permeable fiber comprising fiber and the water-permeable agent according to Claim 1 applied to the fiber by 0.1 to 2.0 weight percent.

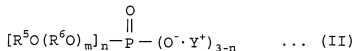
9. (Original) Water-permeable fiber comprising fiber and the water-permeable agent according to Claim 4 applied to the fiber by 0.1 to 2.0 weight percent.

10. (Previously Presented) The water-permeable agent for fiber according to claim 2, wherein said quaternary ammonium salt (A) is contained in an amount of 40 to 70 weight % based on the water-permeable agent.

11. (Currently Amended) A water-permeable agent for fiber comprising a quaternary ammonium salt (A) represented by the following formula (I):



wherein R^1 is a C_{19} to C_{24} aliphatic hydrocarbon group; each of R^2 , R^3 and R^4 is, independently, a hydrogen atom, C_1 to C_3 aliphatic hydrocarbon group, or C_1 to C_3 hydroxyalkyl group; and X is an ionic residue selected from the group consisting of halogen ions, nitrate ion, acetate ion, methyl sulfate ion, ethyl sulfate ion and dimethyl phosphate ion; and a phosphate salt (B) represented by the following formula (II):

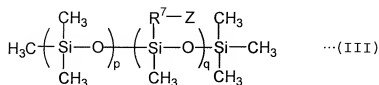


wherein R^5 is a C_6 - C_{20} ~~aliphatic~~ C_{12} aliphatic hydrocarbon group; R^6 is an ethylene and/or propylene group; m is an integer ~~from 0~~ from 2 to 15; Y is an ionic residue selected from the group consisting of ~~hydrogen ion~~, sodium ion, potassium ion, ammonium ion, diethanol ammonium ion, and triethanol ammonium ion; and n is an integer from 1 to 2; ~~one of which~~ wherein one of the quaternary ammonium salt (A) and the phosphate salt (B) constitutes 20 to 80 weight percent and the other of the quaternary ammonium salt (A) and the phosphate salt (B) constitutes 80 to 20 weight percent of the total of said quaternary ammonium salt (A) and said phosphate salt (B).

12. (Cancelled)

13. (Currently Amended) The water-permeable agent for fiber according to Claim 11, wherein R^5 of the formula (II) is a C_8 to C_{18} ~~aliphatic~~ C_{12} aliphatic hydrocarbon group and R^6 of the formula (II) is an ethylene group.

14. (Previously Presented) The water-permeable agent for fiber according to Claim 11, further comprising 5 to 20 weight percent of polyoxyalkylene-modified silicone represented by the formula (III):



wherein R^7 is a methylene group, ethylene group, propylene group, N-(aminoethyl) methylimino group, or N-(aminopropyl) propylimino group; Z is a polyoxyalkylene group containing at least 20 weight percent of polyoxyethylene moieties; and p and q are integers which attain a molecular weight of 1,000 to 100,000 and silicon content of 20 to 70 weight percent.

15. (Previously Presented) The water-permeable agent for fiber according to Claim 11 to be applied to nonwoven fabric.

16. (Previously Presented) The water-permeable agent for fiber according to Claim 11 to be applied to hydrophobic synthetic fiber or composite fiber thereof.

17. (Previously Presented) The water-permeable agent for fiber according to Claim 16, wherein the hydrophobic synthetic fiber is polyolefin fiber.

18. (Previously Presented) Water-permeable fiber comprising fiber and the water-permeable agent according to Claim 11 applied to the fiber by 0.1 to 2.0 weight percent.

19. (Previously Presented) Water-permeable fiber comprising fiber and the water-permeable agent according to Claim 14 applied to the fiber by 0.1 to 2.0 weight percent.

20. (New) The water-permeable agent for fiber according to Claim 11, wherein said phosphate salt (B) is contained in an amount of 30 to 60 weight % based on the water-permeable agent; and

wherein the quaternary ammonium salt (A) is contained in an amount of 40 to 80 weight % and the phosphate salt (B) is contained in an amount of 60 to 20 weight % of the total of said quaternary ammonium salt (A) and said phosphate salt (B).

21. (New) The water-permeable agent for fiber according to Claim 20, wherein the quaternary ammonium salt (A) is contained in an amount of 40 to 70 weight % based on the water-permeable agent.